

Executive Summary – District of Innovation Work Streams
Updated August 5, 2019

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District Goals [DG] for 2018-2019

1. Increase student achievement across the District
2. Provide a safe, secure and orderly environment in all schools
3. Attract and retain all stakeholders
4. Maintain sound financial stability
5. Develop a vision for college and career readiness

TPSD Greatest Needs [GN]

1. **Achievement Gap Closure** – Address the achievement gap of underserved students including students in poverty, EL, and SPED; Create targeted programs to meet all needs
2. **Staffing** – Revisit the staffing structure at the elementary level and class structure, Increase diversity of staff, Revisit EL staffing
3. **Social Emotional Supports** – Increase wrap around services, Utilize trauma informed care, Offer more counseling services, Address bullying / conflict resolution / character education
4. **Career Oriented Pathways** – Create clear career-oriented pathways, Educate students and parents on options, Increase organizational partnerships and opportunities, Focus on employability skills
- 4a. **Testing vs. Soft Skills** – Decrease focus on state standardized testing, Shift focus to ACT / AP exam prep, Create developmentally appropriate soft skill based curriculum at all grades
- 4b. **Communication and Community** – Strengthen public relations, Increase parent and family involvement through streamlined communication at school and grade levels, Share tools for parents to help students including videos and online links

District of Innovation Strategic Planning and Development – All Encompassing

Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Ms. Ferguson, Dr. Thomas, and Ms. McMillan (the District of Innovation advisory group) are meeting on the strategic planning and development of the District of Innovation application and presentation. The Advisory team is focused on the District of Innovation application prioritizing a college and career readiness focus across all grade levels with an initial breakdown of the following:

- **Pre-K – 5th grade** – Career Opportunities
- **6th – 8th grade** – Career Exploration
- **9th – 12th grade** – Career Enhancement

Please see below the draft timeline related to the District of Innovation application development, revision and finalization:

- **Completed Actions**
 - **June 20** – Strategic planning meeting for the Principals and Assistant Principals; Focus on college and career readiness across every level and the direct connection with the 5th TPSD board goal

- **July 16** – Advisory group strategic planning meeting with Dr. Picou, Mr. Cantrell, Dr. English, Dr. Thomas, and Ms. McMillan [Ms. Britton and Ms. Ferguson at CHAMPS]
- **July 22-26** – English and Thomas meet with Secondary principals re: District of Innovation feedback
- **July 26** – Strategic planning meeting with Ms. Britton and Ms. Ferguson
- **Upcoming Actions**
 - **August 8-13** – Initial District of Innovation Plan Writing Time
 - **August 16** – Advisory meeting re: District of Innovation draft plan
 - **August 21-22** – District of Innovation draft presentation at both Principal cohort meetings
 - **August 23-August 30** – District of Innovation updates writing time
 - **August 31** – Letter of Intent submitted to MDE
 - **September 2** – TPSD board submission with draft application and presentation
 - **September 10** – District of Innovation plan initial presentation to the TPSD school board
 - **September 12 at 1:00 pm** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support
 - **September 13 at 8:00 am** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support
 - **September 13 at 3:00 pm** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support
 - **September 16 at 5:30 pm** – Community presentation and feedback phase of District of Innovation process; Request and Collect Community Letters of Support
 - **September 27** – Advisory meeting re: District of Innovation finalized plan
 - **September 30** - TPSD board submission with final application and presentation
 - **October 2-3** - District of Innovation final presentation at both Principal cohort meetings
 - **October 8** –District of Innovation plan final presentation at the TPSD school board meeting for approval [Board approval required for submission]
 - **November 1** – District of Innovation plan submission deadline [Moved to December 3 in the 2018 plan, but I am moving forward with the November 1 timeline]
 - **December 2019** – District of Innovation interview with the MDE team
 - **February 2020** – District of Innovation application considered at the Mississippi State Board of Education meeting
 - **March 2020** – Notification of District of Innovation status at the Mississippi State Board of Education meeting

Project SEARCH – DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

Project SEARCH is a program for young people with significant disabilities designed for success in integrated, competitive employment. This model involves a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), North Mississippi Health Services (NMHS), and the Tupelo Public School District (TPSD). Logistically, this program involves special education students with severe cognitive disabilities finishing their high school career onsite at the North Mississippi Medical Center with the support of a teacher and the opportunity to

participate in internships at the hospital that would ideally turn into viable employment opportunities. The Project SEARCH program will have 8 students for the 2019-2020 school year, and Susan Dudley will serve as the Project SEARCH Teacher / Transition Coordinator.

The MDRS/NMHS/TPSD MOU was approved at the March 19th board meeting, and the MOU was finalized with the MDRS and NMHS official signatures on May 15. The official press conference and press release for this program took place on Monday, August 5 at 10 a.m. at the North Mississippi Medical Center. Dr. Picou, Mr. Wilson [NMMC] and Mr. Howard [MDRS] all spoke at the press conference, and the participating students and their family members were in attendance to participate in this event. The students have now started their three-week window of orientation to the hospital prior to starting their first 10-week internship in September.

Middle College - DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

The Tupelo Public School District team created a middle college with Itawamba Community College, starting with an initial pilot in the 2019-2020 school year, and the official MOU for this partnership was finalized at the May 14th board meeting. Middle College students will graduate from high school with their high school diploma and an Associate's degree.

Middle College Students

- **2019-2020 Founding Cohort** – 11 students
 1. Noor Almasri
 2. Jack Baker
 3. Clayton Conn
 4. Asma Erar
 5. Sara Gonzalez
 6. Clay Green
 7. Will Hood
 8. Tristen Judy
 9. Caroline Michael
 10. Anna Leigh Mobley
 11. Jael Zuniga

Middle College Meetings Since July 22 [Last Executive Summary Submission]

1. **July 25** – ICC Dual Credit and Middle College Meetings
 - a. The interested and eligible Middle College students met with Mr. Philley, Dr. McCraw and Ms. Miller to discuss their course of study, officially confirm their course of study, sign the FERPA parent waiver and register for their classes for the fall 2019 semester.
2. **July 30** – Middle College Press Conference
 - a. The press conference included Dr. Picou and Dr. Allen providing an overview of the program and answering questions. WTVA, the Daily Journal, ICC and our internal communications team were all available to get footage and report on this work.
3. **August 6** – Residual ACT Date

- a. Four students took the residual ACT at the ICC Fulton campus, and three of the four met the dual credit eligibility requirements to participate in the program.

Middle College Upcoming Meetings

1. **August TBD** – ICC Communications Meeting
 - a. The TPSD and ICC communication teams will meet to discuss next steps related to media doing a follow up on the Middle College students in September.

Ms. McMillan will look forward to sharing at the September board meeting about program highlights and updates on these students.

Project Lead the Way – DG 3/5, TPSD GN 1/4/4a

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a nonprofit organization that develops STEM curriculum focused on three pathways – engineering, computer science, and biomedical science. The TPSD implementation plan involves one PLTW Launch module in all gifted classes in the four 3rd-5th grade schools in the fall of 2019. During the spring semester of 2020, the implementation is another PLTW Launch module in either the STEM lab, technology lab or media center as a part of the specials rotation.

The identified PLTW gifted and specials teachers were trained on Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29 at the Toyota Blue springs plant by two PLTW Master Teachers, and Ms. McMillan brought them back together for a planning session on Thursday, August 1. There will be a follow up planning day with all the PLTW gifted teachers on August 15 and a planning day with all the PLTW gifted and specials teachers on October 11.

Ms. McMillan and Mr. Ellis were able to garner a strong social media presence on the training, and the PLTW team has requested the TPSD team write a blog for the PLTW website based on the success of this training. She will make sure to include the link to the blog when finalized.

TPSD Discovery – DG 1, TPSD GN 1/4/4a/4b

The TPSD Discovery program [previously called Blast Off to Big School in July 2018] was a summer program designed for children who have not previously been to a structured educational environment leading up to kindergarten. It was fully funded by the Toyota Wellspring Education Fund. This early childhood programming targeted students to bolster their academic knowledge and behavior expectations in advance of starting kindergarten. It took place from Monday, July 8 through Friday, July 19 at King Early Childhood Education Center.

You will receive a final close out update on this program in the Executive Summary for the September 10 board meeting. This section will include the pre- and post- assessment data for the 30 participating students in the program, an overview of the feedback from the parents and staff, a debrief of the program to continue to improve for future years and a comprehensive look at the culminating expenditures and carry over for the upcoming year of this program.

Hanover Research Process – Alignment contingent on project

The TPSD team partnered with Hanover Research group during the 2018-2019 school year to research evidence-based practices related to key research questions. Dr. Picou, Ms. Britton, Ms. Ferguson and Ms. McMillan set a clear Research Action Plan that focuses on the following prioritized goals:

1. K-12 Literacy Curriculum: K-12 Writing / K-12 Reading / Phonics (Secondary) [Complete]
2. Effective Practices for Grading [Complete]
3. Alternative CTE Program Models [Phase I Complete]
4. CTE Implementation Practices – Career Academies, Wall to Wall Models, Apprenticeship Models [Phase II In Process]

CTE Implementation Practices--Career Academies, Wall to Wal Models, Apprenticeship Models [As provided verbatim by the Hanover Research team]

- **Summary of Project Background** - Tupelo Public School District (TPSD) is applying for a “District of Innovation” designation in the fall of 2019. In support of the application, district leaders have worked with Hanover to identify innovative program models that meet significant district needs, with a focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE). Additional information is needed to gather further details on specific models of interest to Tupelo PSD (Career Academies, Wall to Wall Models, Apprenticeship Models) including: implementation approaches, challenges and solutions to those challenges; and the efficacy of the models ultimately implemented.
- **Key Research Questions for CTE Models of Interest** –
 - How did the district approach the **development** of their CTE programs or models?
 - Did they work with local industry to plan or develop the program i.e. backward design?
 - Did they identify and follow other innovative CTE models or develop their own innovations?
 - How did the district approach **implementation** of the work-based program or model?
 - What challenges did they encounter? (e.g. with scheduling of work-based learning, integration with academics etc.)
 - How were those challenges addressed? Were those solutions effective?
 - How do districts assess the **efficacy** of the CTE program models they implement?
 - What measures of student outcomes do they track and find useful? Over what period of time?
- **Methodology Approach** - Hanover proposes an **in-depth interview study** to gather the specific details and insights that will help TPSD to anticipate and understand the approaches, challenges, and possible resolutions for implementing their own innovative CTE program or model. This methodology is best suited to uncover individual experiences and to identify salient themes across them. Hanover will design, administer (via phone), and analyze the in-depth interviews. Interviews will be used to explore how districts with innovative or alternative CTE programs and models were developed and

implemented. TPSD will use the results of this study to provide insight and information that will be helpful in designing and developing their own innovative approach to CTE in their district.

- **Sampling** - Because qualitative data is not quantifiable, establishing a pre-set number of interviews for the study does not improve data quality. The targeted number of interviews needed varies across studies and participant types (e.g. homogenous populations tend to share similar experiences and therefore require less interviews). **Hanover strives to interview enough participants to ensure we have comprehensively answered the research questions.** In order to target the most relevant cross-section of districts, interview participants will be selected based on their CTE approach and any identifiable innovative practices.

The next phase of the research will be shared with the TPSD team by Monday, August 19.

The TPSD team made the decision to not continue the Hanover Research partnership for the 2019-2020 school year, so the updates on this workstream will discontinue after the September board meeting. If you are interested on accessing research studies on any particular topics, please feel free to contact Ms. McMillan in advance of September as she can search in the system for research articles above and beyond the targeted research that is being tailored to our TPSD specific needs.

Grant Management – Alignment contingent on project

Ms. McMillan oversees grant management for the Tupelo Public School District, and she has built out an overview of the grant funds that are supporting innovative initiatives for the district in order to keep the board apprised of this support stream. As a flag, she has not included the 42 AEE grants based on length, but please contact her if you have any questions about the AEE grant process or grants.

Toyota Grants

- **District of Innovation 1.0 [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – Ms. McMillan received **\$102,000** from TWEF related to STEM related support at the following schools:
 - **3rd-5th Grade Schools** – Project Lead the Way implementation support
 - **Tupelo Middle School** – Robotics equipment in the 7th grade Cyber Foundations class
 - **August 13 Update** – The Wonder Workshop items have been purchased for the Cyber Foundations Class. The Apple iPods are currently in the process of going through the reverse auction bids.
 - **Tupelo Career and Technical Center** – Engineering and Construction class equipment
 - **Tupelo High School** – ActivPanel resources for the science classes
- **Early Childhood [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The TPSD Discovery program was funded through the early childhood funds from TWEF. We received **\$20,000** for this program this year and had carry over of **\$4,850.15** from last year for a total of **\$24,850.15** available. I will be able to provide the final amount spent and carry over after the staff and benefits are paid after the end of August.

- **Professional Development [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – TPSD received **\$25,000** for professional development and national conference funding. Ms. Britton utilized about **\$6,000** of this funding to cover the cost of two additional staff attending the CHAMPS training in Portland that were not built into the federal funds utilized to cover the other staff. Ms. McMillan utilized **\$9,500** for the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) teacher training, and she plans to use additional funds to train the current PLTW with the follow up training that will allow them to train other PLTW teachers in house. There is currently **\$9,998.36** available in this funding source.
- **WorkKeys [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – TPSD received **\$15,000** in January 2019 to cover the WorkKeys credential funding. This will be used by students participating in some of the TCTC programs, and there is currently still **\$14,118** available.
- **Planting Partnerships [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program received **\$10,000** to be utilized across all the Pre-K through 8th grade schools to support this program. The current balance is **\$6,804.21**.
- **Outdoor STEM [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program received **\$10,000** for the Lawndale greenhouse and corresponding program. The current balance is **\$3,513.68** that will need to be expended prior to September 1.
- **Full STEAM Ahead [Toyota Wellspring Education Fund]** – Ms. Britton wrote the Full STEAM Ahead! grant for implementation in the 2018-2019 school year. There were **\$45,000** in funds related to FOSS kits that were repurposed for the Project Lead the Way implementation prior to Ms. McMillan receiving the Toyota USA Foundation grant. Ms. McMillan needs to work with Dr. Luse to finalize the plans to utilize this funding.
- **Project Lead the Way [Toyota USA]** – Ms. McMillan received **\$40,000**, **\$10,000** per 3rd-5th grade school, to offer support with the initial implementation costs of Project Lead the Way.

Small Grants

- **Growing Healthy Waves [E.R. Carpenter Foundation]** - The Growing Healthy Waves program received **\$10,000** to be utilized across all the Pre-K through 8th grade schools to support this program, and this money has not yet been spent.
- **Growing Healthy Waves [Donations]** – The Growing Healthy Waves program has received donations from organizations like Rotary, Junior Auxiliary, etc. that supports this program. The current fund balance is **\$2,642.66**.
- **Lowe's Toolbox [Lowe's]** – Crystal Wilson at TMS received **\$4,975** to provide funding for her robotics class.
 - **August 13 Update** – This grant has been expended for all except for **\$24.02**, and I am waiting to confirm if Ms. Wilson has a need for this last amount.
- **TVA/StemX [TVA]** – Crystal Wilson at TMS received **\$5,000** to provide funding for her robotics class.
 - **August 13 Update** – This grant has been expended for all except for **\$412.80**, and I am waiting to confirm how Ms. Wilson would like to use the rest of these available funds.